

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
HOLYOKE

INFORMANT: GEORGE FITZGERALD

INTERVIEWER: BILL HARTFORD

DATE: MAY 14, 1988

H = BILL HARTFORD

F = GEORGE FITZGERALD

SG-HO-T317

H: Testing, one two three. Testing, testing, one two three. This is an interview with George Fitzgerald, [clears throat] the last living member of the Dynamiters Club. Could you, could you tell us then, Mr. Fitzgerald, uh when, when and where you were born.

F: I was born in Holyoke, March 14, 1902.

H: [whistles then laughs for several seconds] Where did, where did you go to school, which [it's uh] public schools or did you go to St. Jerome's or (- -)

F: I went to both places temporarily, uh but mostly I, I got my degrees, I mean my diplomas, from the Holyoke Public Schools.

H: Public schools.

F: Public schools in Holyoke.

H: We'll skip the one on Father Harkins. I uh (- -)

F: I, I remember him vaguely.

H: Yeah. Yeah.

F: He was about (- -)

H: Very imposing figure.

F: Imposing. [interviewer laughs] Just vaguely is the answer.

H: Yeah, yeah.

F: He died I think around 1910 or so.

H: It was right around there, yeah. Nine-, i-it might have been nineteen, it was right around that area, yeah. (F: Area) Yeah. What were some of the jobs that you did as a, a young man in Holyoke?

F: Well I, I worked (- -) Well my first job in the mill was the Germanian Mills. That was [interviewer clears throat] a, a mill. Uh I worked there for five years. And then after (- -)

H: Wasn't that a, a largely (- -)

F: They were in

H: Would, would have been,

F: Textiles.

H: Yeah, would have been

F: A woolen, woolen (- -)

H: Largely a Polish workforce then? German and Polish?

F: It was mostly German. They, we used to call it the German mill. My uncle was uh, knew the, as I say, my, my uncle was working with the Holyoke Water Power Company, and the Water Power Company used to be dealing with (- -) They had a steam plant i-in the German mill, and my uncle knew the master mechanic there. That's how I got a job there. [interviewer laughs] Well I worked there, I worked there for about five years. And uh (- -)

H: What year would this have been about?

F: That was, I uh quit there in 1929, just before the crash. [both laugh] I was hopeful that I could get something better, and the, then when the crash came, every, I was out of work there for that winter and I didn't get work until 1931. In the [Fahr] Alpaca there (H: Yeah) I worked there. And I worked there until nineteen uh, until the, when was that, 1936. 1936 (H: What) just as the (- -)

H: What department did you work in in the [Fahr]?

F: The burling room. (H: Okay) That's uh finishing plant. That was a, a finishing plant what we call. Alpaca linings and, (H: Hm) and uh overcoats they used to make at that time. (H: Yeah)

H: I'd like to come back to the Dynamiters, but uh this might be a, an appropriate time to kind of skip on to how did you become involved in the campaign to organize textile workers in Holyoke?

F: Well, they uh, I happen to know a neighbor by the name of Fred Brown. He was a, a neighbor, he lived on Wilton Street. And he, he, he was in the Firemens' Union, and uh he, he [priced] me, both he and another man by the John [Bleeshes]. He was a, (H: Mmm!) [Alsatian] a-i-industry. He told me about Michaeljohn addressing the Central Labor Union, and telling them how few people had what they called college contact. That a very small percentage of the population in those days ever went to college. Any of the people in Holyoke, I know a-, all of my older brothers, none of them went to college, at all. Uh you'd get a job i-, in the mill when you were fourteen or sixteen and, and that would be it. But he, he proposed to me that Michaeljohn was bringing lecturers in there patterned after mostly the British workingmens' groups that they had experienced in Scotland or England. And uh they met every month, or e-, every week at uh the [unclear] Club there. And I went down there and I kept going there all the time, and (- -)

H: Well this is how you became associated with the Dynamiters.

F: That's how I became associated with them. (H: Oh, okay) Just through conversations of former members. (H: Ahh)

H: Could you, could you tell us something about a few of these people? Whatever you might be uh, I don't, let me just throw out some names and if you can, you know and uh (- -)

F: Well, John [Bleeshes] was uh an alderman, was elected alderman. He was in politics in Holyoke for a number of years, and he was a machinist working for uh (H: Hm) [Fahr] Alpaca. He was a pretty clever fellow. Smart, and he believed in owning his own home and all that, and having a family. That was [Bleeshes]. John Bresnahan was another one. He was an operating engineer with the uh, with the City of Holyoke. But his uh, [interviewer clears throat] at their plant on Sargent Street. (H: Okay) That is, when they took over from the Holyoke Water Power Company, they had what they call a coal plant. (H: Okay) [He's] worked there. And Fred Brown was in (H: Ju-) the Fireman's Union (- -)

H: With, uh to talk about John Bresnahan, he was involved in a number of educational activities as (F: Yes) well, wasn't he?

F: Yes. He was uh, well he was head of the Operating Engineers Union. They had a union [of that]. And they had lectures, special lectures, that came from uh Amherst, or from the University, later; and they came down to the Dynamiters to lecture on electricity and its effect on coal, and throughout the industry. That was John Bresnahan. (H: Yeah) Uh, he died here oh, about ten years ago. [Bleeshes] died, oh, forty years ago. They're (H: Um hm) all dead now.

H: Yeah. H-, how old were uh, were they? I, I, I can't find any good biographical information on these people, the kind of hard numbers and on dates of birth and things like (- -)

F: They were all elderly men when I met them.

D: Yeah. Were they, because you met, you've met them in uh what, the m-mid, mid twenties and, (F: Yes) and they would have been what, about forty-five, fifty (F: Yes) then? (F: That's right) Okay. Good. That, that, that kind of, that's, that's the general impression that I had, but I wasn't, as I say I wasn't sure, because (- -) (F: That's right) Yeah. Oh, fine.

F: They're all gone now.

H: Yeah. Fred Brown?

F: He's dead. Yeah. He died (- -) He was uh head of the uh Firemens' Union in, in Holyoke. That's uh firemen that worked in the, for [unclear] or any place. They had a union. It was separate from the Operating Engineers. Uh, and uh, uh they were mostly, worked in the coal plants. And uh steam, getting up steam. Uh, he's dead a long time ago.

H: Another of the firemen who, who uh was very active in labor circles was Francis Curran? (F: Yes) What can you tell us about him?

F: Well he was a much younger man (H: Oh) than any of those men. He was uh, much younger, much younger. I didn't have much to do with him. H-he was, uh both he and Alden were at loggerheads you know. [interviewer laughs] Alden wanted that job that he got with the Labor Relations Board. (H: For the State?) From the State. (H: Okay) And, and he was a slick politician uh (- -)

H: Francis Curran?

F: Francis Curran. [interviewer laughs] He got the job and he got the support of Ervin Fleming and eh, (H: Aww!) and uh Bresnahan and they were, and Fred Brown were all, all for Curran, eh (- -)

H: Well Curran had mm- (- -)

F: Curran was (- -)

H: Had deeper roots in labor actually.

F: H-he was head of the Firemen's Union as well as (- -) (H: Yeah) And uh, but he was a, a really [interviewer coughs] go-getter. Eh, Francis Curran [when I knew him]. His son now is, is in uh the contracting business in Holyoke. He runs that warehouse in, in Holyoke.

H: Oh, okay. I, okay I know where you're talking about, yeah. (F: Yes) Yeah, yeah. (F: That's him) Right.

F: That's his son.

H: How about, an interesting figure here is Michael McLean. He didn't get to Holyoke [both talk] until about 1905.

F: He was in the Papermakers (H: Yeah) Union.

H: And uh, he was apparently an organizer for the United Mine Workers before he came to Holyoke (F: Yeah) as a very young man.

F: Yeah, (H: Do you reme-) he was originally from Pennsylvania.

H: Yes, yeah. Do you remember anything about him? I know he made a number of efforts to try to ex-, I think, you know, for [both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear] the Papermakers Union. Yeah.

F: He was uh, whe-, when they organized the uh, under Roosevelt they had the NRA. He was interested in, in getting everybody into a union, any kind of a union. [both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear]

H: Was, was he, was, wa-, y-, w-, did the rag workers and the finishing workers as well as the traditional (- -)

F: He was with the Papermakers [both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear]

H: Yeah. (F: Yeah) But did he try to get all, everybody in the whole mill in?

F: Yes. (H: Ah, okay) That's right. It was industrial rather than uh, [vertical] or (H: Yeah) what do you call it? Uh the Papermakers Union was everybody that works (H: Yeah) [unclear].

H: As I'm uh reading back over some of the old Papermakers records, they're always talking about organization but I'm never quite sure if they're talking about reorganizing the, the women in the rag and finishing departments, or if they're just talking about organizing beater engineers and machine tenders up in the Berkshires who might have been competing with them. And yeah, so I was, I wasn't clear on that. Ap-, they're apparently talking about both. Or, for McLean anyways.

F: Well in, in Holyoke it was the Papermakers Union. And everybody that worked in the paper mill was potentially a, a union member, if they recognized it as a union. And Mike McLean was the one who was uh, sponsored that mostly. He was the organizer [for an extent]. (H: Yeah) But they had other organizers besides him. (H: Yeah)

H: Tell us something about uh Jack [Regan].

F: Jack [Regan]. He was before my time. [interviewer laughs] I don't remember him.

H: I think you once, uh in an earlier conversation we had, you mentioned that he sometimes got into a little tiffs with Tom Rowan about drinking. (F: Yes) [interviewer laughs for 5 to 10]

seconds while Mr. Fitzgerald continues to speak]

F: Yes, but I, I wasn't in that part of the uh, the uh, uh I wasn't in the Prohibition movement at that time. (H: Yeah) But i-, a-, I heard of, I heard of that [Regan]. He used to have a hell of an arguments, geez, you know with Rowan and [Regan]. I heard about that, yeah. [interviewer chuckles] Heh.

H: Talk, talking about, Tom Rowan was just, oh he was into just about everything over the course of his long career. (F: Yes) Could you tell us what you remember about Tom Rowan?

F: Well, he was uh a dedicated Prohibitionist, a real Prohibitionist. He was a very, he had a great mind. He was a believer in trade unionism. He ran for Mayor. He never was elected, but he was very, wherever there was a lecture or anything dealing with the labor movement or with the Prohibition movement, he was there. [interviewer laughs] He was dedicated (H: Yeah) to, to the idea.

H: Do you, do you reme-, uh, him and Ervin Fleming took the stump in the, in, in the early (F: That's right) thirties [both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear] to help organize the textile workers. (F: That's right) To help organize the textile workers as well. (F: That's right) Do you remember any of that? Any of their speeches? I think Thom-, Thomas Burns was uh involved early on as well.

F: That's right. He was representing the CIO. (H: Yeah) Tom Burns. Uh, as opposed to the AF of L. (H: Yeah)

H: [whispers something unclear] Can you tell us more about some of the educational activities of the, of the Dynamiters? Or, even about your own efforts in the area of adult education. You've certainly been active over the s-, space of some fifty odd years here and promoting it is (- -) [Mr. Fitzgerald says something that is unclear and interviewer laughs] And actually, longer than that even, uh (- -)

F: Well, I, [pause: 2 sec.] you see, [pause: 2 sec.] as I said about before, Rousseau, you've got to show your interest. What made those people interested in education was that they wanted to get a, a, enough wages to live. You take the, the wages of a textile worker in Holyoke, I worked for forty cents an hour, and there was women that working there in the mills too for less than that. But uh the average man, uh adult man, working in the textile was forty cents an hour. They had no union. No union was tolerated. If they knew you were a union man then uh they'd find some reason to get rid of you. The Holyoke Water Power never had anybody working for them that was union. And they were the, the power in Holyoke. They owned all the property that was of any importance. They, the (- -)

H: Can you tell us about some of the s-specific programs? Some of those that you set up uh say, in conjunction with your work trying to organize textile workers. There was a (- -)

F: The only way you can organize, in my opinion, is to get the person to come to a lecture, and let them explain the meaning of the labor movement. If you, [interviewer clears throat] if he

will not come out and uh attend a lecture or listen to you, how can you, (H: Is that) how can you educate them?

H: Is that what you tried to do is just, [both talk] (F: That's what we tried to do) when, when you, in the th-, in thirty-six, thirty-seven when you tried to organize the textile (F: Right) mills? (F: Yes) That was under your (- -)

F: [unclear] as much publicity as possible.

H: And to try to, and, to try to, and just set up these lectures, and to educate worker, you know textile workers in unionism.

F: And individually tell them to come to the meeting and listen who, to what he has to say. A lot of people came, but after a while they'd stay for three or four lectures, four lectures, five. Something else would come in. (H: Hmm) That would be it. The same way (- -) [interviewer clears throat] Then of course with the, with the dues, you'd ask a person to give a contribution, and of course if a person was getting very low wages, it was pretty hard to get a contribution. So the CIO came on and they had plenty of money under Sidney Hillman and they uh threw a lot of money in giving organizers. I worked with them for a while.

H: How [Both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear] did you initially become involved in uh, you were of course working in the m-, in the [fire] at the time, (F: Yes) so I mean but how did you initially get tied in with the uh textile workers organizing committee? Was it through the Dynamiters or [Mr. Fitzgerald speaks at same time; unclear] through, through the mill?

F: Through the Dynamiters. That's right.

H: That, that leads to another quest-, what, what were general relations like between the AFL and CIO unions in Holyoke?

F: Well that was the, that was the stumbling block see? (H: Yeah) [both talk; unclear] John L. Lewis, John L. Lewis and, and Sidney Hillman were up against uh Green, who was president of the S-, of the uh AF of L. AF of L was, was uh, in the opinion of John L. Lewis, an [unclear]. And uh they were not, they were uh, uh this was, AF of L was a craft union, (H: Yeah) and (- -)

H: [interviewer interrupts; both talk, some of it unclear] But I was just wondering about kind of the personal relationships (- -)

F: Primarily, and the CIO was more [unclear] an (H: Yeah) industrial union.

H: I was wondering about the personal relations between the two in Holyoke. You know because you for example, you were a CIO organizer, (F: Yes) yet you were also a very close friend of all these AF of L leaders.

F: Well they'd say to you, [interviewer laughs] "Well, if you can get the textile people to

organize, fine. We can't." They confessed very much to you (H: Uunh!) that they could not do anything with the textile workers. And they couldn't do much with the Papermakers Union. Uh they had unions uh time and time again. But it, it fizzled out. (H: Yeah; uunh; okay) They still got a Papermakers Union (H: Okay) in Holyoke, (H: Okay) but I don't know how effective it is.

H: [I assit], before going on, I'd like to ask you about a couple of the other people that were, that were in the, in the textile workers organizing committees, (F: Yep) and any things you might be able to tell us [Mr. Fitzgerald says something; unclear] a-, about them.

F: [Vanass] uh, uh, who [unclear]

H: Edward, Edward [Vanass]?

F: [Vanass], yes.

H: Who later formed a breakaway AF of L union.

F: He was ehh, before the CIO started, he had a union, or he was president of the Textile Union's AF of L. (H: Um hm) And they had a pretty good union. That is, the people paid u-, union dues. They were mostly English.

H: Would have been largely loom [fixers] and mule sp-, or (- -)

F: [both talk; interviewer unclear] Mule spinners, that's right. More of a craft. (H: Yeah) Uh s-, and skilled work, eh, with the textile. There's a lot of work uh that's done in textile mills you know that requires a lot of skill. (H: Oh yeah, well even (- -)) Like a sew-, like a sewer for example. [Worsted] sewer, burling room (- -)

H: Even ah weaving, weaving is, (F: And weaving) weaving is uh (- -)

F: Weaving (- -) Well that's what (- -)

H: Very e-, experience counts.

F: Yes. [interviewer clears throat] They were all c-, uh they were all AF of L. And of course the uh, uh, the CIO was more of a, an industrial union.

H: Yeah. [both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear] So Vanass really didn't, for people say in the spinning departments or the you know, the twisters and the (- -) (F: Yes) He really, he just didn't have much use for these people.

F: That's right. (H: All right; okay) That was the stumbling block. (H: Yeah)

H: Another person who, who popped up in these early, who, as I said, who as you know as we were talking went on to become a major figure in the, you know in the, in the American labor movement was Thomas Burns.

F: Yes. (H: Uhh) I remember him. (H: You remember su-) He was originally with the Rubber Workers Union, the Fisk Rubber, what they used to call it. It was taken over by the Royal [unclear]

H: That was Ann Sullivan's brother?

F: That's right. [interviewer clears throat] She, eh, she was later with the textile workers, (H: Yeah) uh, under the CIO. (H: Yeah) They still have a, an office in Springfield [unclear] to my knowledge or they did have until recently. (H: Yeah)

H: [Mr. Fitzgerald talks at same time; unclear] I think it's the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union now. They (- -)

F: [unclear] clothing. (H: Yeah, yeah) It's mostly subsidized by Sidney Hill, you know the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. (H: Yeah)

H: How did Thomas Burns become involved in the, in the Holyoke textile organizing campaign?

F: Well, he was (- -)

H: Was it simply that he was (- -)

F: He was CIO with the Rubber Workers. (H: Yeah) You remember the sitdown strikes that they had out in Detroit? He was in on that. (Yeah) So he was a, a, a strong supporter of the sitdown strike and, and the uh CIO, which sponsored that. So he, he was living in Holyoke all the time. (H: Okay) He is a Holyoke man. (H: Yeah) And he came back and through Sidney Hillman he was suggested as one of the leaders here in, in Holyoke for the CIO organizing committee. So uh after a while they felt that they should get a man from New Hampshire. Uh, I forget what his name is. What's his name?

H: [talking at same time] Is it any of these?

F: [pause: 5 sec.] I think it's [Jouvenville] if I'm not mistaken. (H: Yeah) Because he was a French spoken [unclear]. He came from Manchester, New Hampshire. He came down and he was the sponsor of the CIO organizing committee. (H: Right) I can't think of his name.

H: Yeah, I'm not sure if it was [Jouvenville] or, I, yeah, I c-, I don't know myself. I know that [Jouvenville] later joined Vanass in the AF of L.

F: Yeah, that's different. This fellow never did.

H: No, na, this would have been somebody else. Yeah.

F: He died. He's dead now. (H: Yeah) Anyway.

H: How about uh some of the women organizers, uh Mary Hoffman?

F: I don't remember her.

H: Yeah. Mrs. Romanski?

F: They might have been there, but I, that don't ring a bell with me. I (H: Yeah) wasn't in that long, (H: Yeah) that long. (H: Yeah) With the CIO.

H: Archie [Traconi]?

F: Yeah, I remember him. He was there for a while and then they transferred him down to Hartford-, uh to New Haven, to work with Italians that were in [interviewer clears throat at same time; unclear] people down there. He was a, Italian. Yeah I remember him. He was only there a short time. (H: Yeah)

H: How (- -)

F: But he later gave it up completely.

H: How old were these people generally, the organizers and leaders of the campaign?

F: They were rather young. (H: Yeah)

H: Because you would have been, what? [Mr. Fitzgerald says something at same time; unclear] In your mid thirties?

F: Yes. (H: Yeah)

H: They were all, all about the same age, uh (- -)

F: Yes. (H: Yeah) All about the same age. (H: Aha) Yeah. (H: Okay)

H: Let me move on to uh [pause: 5 sec.] the AF of L CIO split. General relations. So then, even afterwards, even, even, even after you'd worked as a CIO organizer you still got on very well with uh you know, (F: Oh yeah) with your old buddies at the Dynamiters Club. (F: Yes) Yeah. Was there a lot of that mixing kind of back and forth between the AF of L and CIO?

F: Well, it's hard to tell with power. You see, (H: [unclear]) frankly speaking, a [interviewer clears throat] labor organizer is a man with power. [Those], when I think of that fellow from uh, when I think of Vanass. He, they don't want to give up power at all. You can see it in politicians. [Interviewer chuckles softly] Name a politician that wants to give up anything that he's got. (H: Yeah) No. They are, and they become very dictatorial. (H: Yeah)

H: Because I got a, [Mr. Fitzgerald talks at same time; unclear] I got a, I got a sense of that.

It didn't, I didn't, uh, I got bits and pieces from, from the newspapers and things. There seemed to be, you know that it was very much a power struggle as much as a struggle, (F: That's [unclear] exactly what it was) but as much as, as much as a struggle about different notions of unionism, it was a struggle of who was going to lead, (F: That's it) and who, you know (- -)

F: Who had the power. Sidney Hillman. Well [unclear] can see, Sidney Hillman with uh Franklin Roosevelt; his connection. And uh textile workers started right in with, (H: Yeah) with strong supporter there. John L. Lewis, he supported the, the, the, Franklin Roosevelt.

H: How, for example, you know, uh, I-let me give you an example. Uh Anna Sullivan, she later emerged as the, the major leader of the textile workers in this, for the whole, for the whole region. (F: That's right) She was the head of the Holyoke joint board.

F: Through her brother. (F: That's right) His influence.

H: And uh, how, how did she get on say with people like uh Ervin Fleming or Tom Rowan or some of the old Dynamiters?

F: She never had anything to do with those people. (F: Aha) No. Duh, Ervin Fleming and them were all much, much older than she was. (H: Yeah) She was just a young (- -)

H: So there was, there was an age diff- (- -)

F: She's younger than, than uh Burns himself. (H: Ah huh)

H: So there was really an age difference here between (F: Yes) the two groups as well as uh [both talk] (F: That's it exactly) di-, diff-, diff-, as well as different ideas of unionism. (F: That's right) Unhh!

F: Yeah, that's the reason. And uh [pause: 3 sec.] she was supported by the Amalgamated CLothing Workers. That's uh (- -)

H: Yeah, until, until (- -)

F: And they were [very] powerful.

H: Until the Textile Workers Union was, became an independent union. (F: That's right) Yeah. Ahh.

H: [pause: 3 sec.] Okay. I'd just like to skip on now, it's almost skipping back I guess, to uh, to something you know that I've been curious about, and that's the, the place of say Irish nationalism, [pause: 2 sec.] in uh, you know say in the Dynamiters Club, or in Irish Holyoke itself during ah, you know during the twenties, during the thirties. You mentioned uh you know in a conversation that we had sometime back uh you talked about the Robert Emmett Club. (F: Yeah)

F: Well, the Robert Emmett Club was uh, was really a s-, [chuckles] was a [unclear], or it was a, they were for a Republic (- -)

H: Republi- (- -) I was just going to ask you about this. How did the Dynamiters line up and say in, you know when it came to the free state and Republic split. They lined up with Republic, Republican, with Republi- (- -)

F: They were uh with the Republic, I would (H: Y-) say so. (H: Yeah)

H: Was that the same, how about the local uh AOH, uh the Ancient Order of Hibernians?

F: Well there was two of them, two organizations of AOH. One was, to my knowledge, one was for the Republic and the other was (- -)

H: Free State?

F: For the Free State. (H: Unnh!) There were a lot of people in Holyoke were, were behind the Free State. (H: Yeah) What about the Knights of Columbus? Would they have lined up with the Free State as (- -)

F: No uh, not, not that I know of. (H: No.) The Knights of Columbus were mostly religious (H: Yeah) people. (H: Okay; ah!)

H: Could you tell us about some of the activities of the Robert Emmett Club?

F: [pause: 5 sec.] They bought speakers, Irish speakers to the, to Holyoke. But uh, only those that were interested in the Republic of Ireland really attended. (H: Ohh) There wasn't too many in, to my knowledge. I, I remember some of the speakers they had there. They were very bitter towards the British, British rule in Ireland. Very much so, yes. (H: Hmm)

H: Would it have probably been people whose, whose parents, or who, who themselves came over late? Uh, (F: Yes) that were most likely to attend these (- -)

F: That's right. (H: Yeah) But not the people that were born in this country so much you know. [both talk; Mr. Fitzgerald unclear]

H: They really had uh (- -)

F: They weren't interested.

H: Ahh! Okay. Okay, that's, that's very important [to you]. Ahh. That's really about all that I have. Uh, you know, thank you very much.

F: Well that's, that's covers everything. [interviewer laughs]

[people talk in background; unclear]

[tape stops momentarily]

F: Uhh, don't take that (- -)

H: Let's put it back, back on.

F: You take Avery now; uh that, that I mentioned about the Mayor of Holyoke. He's a graduate of Amherst. (H: Um hm) Great Alumnus. [unclear] (- -)

[end of side one]

[several minutes of blank tape before interview resumes]

H: (- -) Port of things like ah the abolition of child labor, and the Child Labor Amendment sometimes came into conflict with the local church, even though many of the Dynamiters themselves were good Catholics.

F: Well all your Protestant churches were against the Child Labor Amendment, too. All the owners, I remember the owners of the Alpaca and uh the, they thought that was a, very much of a Communist uh idea. I remember that very well. (H: Mmm) They were absolutely opposed to them and it, it wasn't uh just the Catholic Church that was opposed (H: Yeah) to it. They'll say it is now but, (H: Yeah; okay) they were opposed to it. Child labor wasn't done away with in this country until Roosevelt, Franklin

H: 1938,

F: Roosevelt came into power. Yeah.

H: The Fair Labor Standards Act.

F: Th-that's when that came in. (H: Yeah; yeah)

H: Ah (- -)

F: You had child labor uh,

H: It's (- -)

F: Fourteen years old.

H: Sometime-, it

F: Course you

H: Seems to me as I'm going through (- -)

F: As I said before, i-, you could go to work in the mills at four-, at age fourteen.

H: It see-, as I was trying to make some sense of the Dynamiters, it seemed to me that their interest in you know abolishing child labor and their interest in education were all connected; were all part of a piece uh, were all part of a way, you know

F: Well that's [both talk; much of it unclear]

H: It was the way that they saw the world.

F: That's ideal.

H: But that's what they wanted.

F: That's what they wanted. (H: Yeah) Yes. But they didn't get it. (H: Yeah; all right) Until you got [Bartley] now uh with Community College. (H: Ahh) Wi-, wi-, with a fat salary. [interviewer laughs] But they didn't get those salaries year (- -)

[tape stops momentarily]

H: Back in, back in 1928 the Daughters of the American Revolution put the Dynamiters on their, on their blacklist. Do you remember how the Dynamiters responded to that?

F: That, that, in the words of Harry Elmer Barnes, "This is a legion of honor." [interviewer laughs] They gave a listing of not only the Dynamiters but, oh I haven't got the, I haven't got the list. They were one, and they were picked on. There was another workers education in Pennsylvania under Bryn Mawr University, that they had something similar like the Dynamiters. Bryn Mawr was a, a very liberal college. I don't know much about them but (H: Yeah) it was in Pennsylvania. (H: Yeah)

H: Yeah, y-, I ran into a, a newsclip on that where the, yeah uh the Dynamiters issued a statement that this was an unexpected honor for them, (F: Yeah) and that they were going to draw up a suitable set of resolutions.

[tape is intermittently distorted for several minutes]

F: Yeah, that was a boost! [interviewer laughs] That's the way considered it. [chuckles] They weren't that good. [interviewer continues to laugh] Of course they had good speakers there, but (- -)

H: Could you, [pause: 2 sec.] could you, could you tell us about a couple of those speakers? You mentioned uh Harry Elmer Barnes.

F: Uh. [pause: 5 sec.]

H: Besides his book on the World War what were some of the other things that Harry Elmer Barnes ah talked about?

F: Nu-, uh one man that comes to my mind, Newton [Arvin]. He was a professor at Smith. He wrote a book called, on Hawthorne. I always got a t-, a, a, a kick out of reading Nathaniel Hawthorne's works. He was uh given a job by Professor Pierce, Pierce Buchanan Lincoln. They gave him a job as a, a counselor in England. And when he was over in England he wrote about the conditions of the working man in England. It is the most revealing and the most sophisticated (H: Uh huh) description of working conditions in England that I, that I've read by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It's in his works. [interviewer clears throat] He wrote another one called "Ethan [Brand]". He's, he had a terrific imagination. This Ethan Brand was a man that knew everything in the line of science and technique, but he had no heart. He could not see the significance of the common man, and he died, [chuckles] he died unwept, (H: Hm) because of the fact that he had no love. (H: Hmm) Poor man. (H: Hm) Well uh I kind of liked that i-, uh, Hawthorne. It's more of a Puritan tradition of, of the common people. But he did have morals, I will say, and he does an awful job on the British uh facu-, the British uh condition of the working people in England. If you get a chance to read Nathaniel Hawthorne, [unclear] (- -)

H: What were some of the other people that, that spoke at (- -)

F: Well that was uh (- -)

H: Do you remember Paul Douglas?

F: Well he's the mostly, he was from the University. He went to Bowdoin College in uh Maine. When he was there he was uh a, prohib-, uh he, he drank, uh he drank a good deal according to, I was told by other people that went to Bowdoin. Now Bowdoin College was a very religious school, and he became interested in John [Woolman] who was a, (H: Quaker) a Quaker. And he joined the Quakers after, Paul Douglas did. He married, he, he married Ruth, uh, uh, he married a millionaire's daughter who was uh, a, a great believer in Communism. And they had two children I think, and they broke up over Communism. And then he married again [Lareda] Taft s-, s- daughter who was a sculptor in Chicago. Uh (- -)

H: Do you remember some of [unclear] (- -)

F: Then he ran for senator.

H: Do you remember some of his appearances in Holyoke? [blows nose]

F: He came back [interviewer blows nose] after he [interviewer blows nose] left uh Amherst. He was only at Amherst for one year, 1924 and 1925. He came back in 1925 uh on a sabbatical that he had at the University of Chicago, and he spoke on Puerto Rico. And he uh, he was very much opposed to the, to the government of, of Puerto Rico at that time. He was a real radical. (H: Yeah) But uh, after he became, [interviewer blows nose] after he married and fell out with his wife, he uh (- -) I can't think of her name. I met her. She, uh Ruth. She kept her (- -)

[tape stops]

[end of tape]